

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEARINGS ADDED FOR DNR ENGINEERING STANDARDS FOR OPEN FEEDLOTS

DES MOINES – The DNR will hold an additional public hearing in Mason City on Jan. 10 to hear comments on proposed rule changes for animal feeding operations. The public comment period has also been extended from Jan. 7 to midnight on Jan. 10.

The Jan. 10 meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Lime Creek Nature Center, 3501 Lime Creek Road, in Mason City. A separate meeting will also be held in Spencer on Jan. 10 at 1 p.m. at the Spencer Events Center, 800 West 18th Street.

The DNR is offering the additional meetings because inclement weather may have prevented people from attending Jan. 5 hearings in Mason City and Spencer.

The proposed rule change will clearly define engineering standards for those open feedlots that need a permit, along with other open feedlot requirements.

The public hearing scheduled for Friday in Cedar Rapids will still take place. The hearing will be held at 8:30 a.m. in the Iowa Rooms A and B on the 3rd floor of the Iowa Hall, Kirkwood Community College, 6301 Kirkwood Boulevard S.W., in Cedar Rapids.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing during the public hearings. All other comments must be received no later than midnight on Jan. 10, 2005. Any person who intends to attend a public hearing and has special requirements, such as those related to

hearing or mobility, should contact Gene Tinker, coordinator of DNR's animal feeding operations.

Written comments on the proposed rules should be directed to Gene Tinker at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 East Ninth St., Des Moines, Ia 50319, Fax (515) 281-8895, or by e-mail to gene.tinker@dnr.state.ia.us.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker, at (515) 281-3103.

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WATER MONITORING CONFERENCE TO BE HELD JAN. 13-14

AMES — Iowans' work to improve and understand the state's water quality will be highlighted at the DNR's Fifth Annual Water Monitoring Conference, to be held in Ames on Jan. 13 and 14.

Anyone interested in water quality is encouraged to attend the conference in Benton Auditorium, located in the Scheman Building on the Iowa State University campus. Cost for the two-day event is \$20, and poster presentations are welcome.

The registration deadline for the conference is 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 7. The late registration fee is \$25. The registration fee will be waived for IOWATER volunteers who are not federal, state or county employees.

The conference will feature three keynote speakers. David Williamson is a sculptor, poet and speaker from Ogden who also works as a creativity consultant and with organizations for leadership training. His "Ready. Set. Grow" presentation will focus on bio-based leadership skills.

Dennis R. Frame, a professor at the University of Wisconsin (UW) and co-director of the UW's Discovery Farms program, will speak about improving water quality through research and education. Discovery Farms is a program that researches commercial agricultural operations and tracks the effectiveness of environmental rules and regulations and their effect on profitability.

"Nature Based Tourism," presented by Chris Collier, executive director of the Great Bend Kansas Convention and Visitors Bureau, will discuss how to understand both the nature of tourism and how nature tourism is used to partner for success.

Several other presentations will be offered on Jan. 14, including:

- Bacteria source tracking
- Storm water management
- Volunteers in action, which will include presentations from Iowa volunteer groups

On-site wastewater and water quality, wetlands, lake ecosystems in the Midwest, and humans and the environment will also be discussed.

Additional highlights include volunteers and professionals sharing their experiences and insight in an informal setting at the Volunteer Roundtable Group Discussions. Roundtable participants can learn to use DNR interactive mapping, identify aquatic insects, access information from the IOWATER and STORET online databases and learn about plans for this year's Project AWARE river cleanup trip.

A short ceremony Thursday evening will recognize recipients of 2004 IOWATER volunteer awards and organizers of the 2004 statewide snapshot water monitoring event.

A full agenda and more information are available at the DNR water monitoring Web site at <http://wqm.igsb.uiowa.edu/>

For more information, contact Mary Pat Heitman at (319) 335-1576 or mheitman@igsb.uiowa.edu.

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IOWA ETHANOL SALES SET RECORDS IN NOVEMBER

DES MOINES – Iowa motorists set new ethanol sales records in November when more than 96 million gallons of E10 were purchased across the state. The previous sales record was set in July when 95 million gallons were sold.

According to the monthly motor fuel tax report issued by the Iowa Department of Revenue, the market share for E10 was 68.6 percent in November, also a new record. The previous market share record was 68.3 percent set in March 2004.

“Record high gasoline prices helped push Iowa sales of ethanol blends over the top throughout 2004,” said Tami Foster, energy planner for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. “Ethanol-blended fuel typically sells for 3 to 5 cents less per gallon than regular gasoline. With more than 90 million gallons selling each month since April, we expect to set a new annual sales record for 2004 with 1 billion gallons of E10 sold.”

E10, a blend of 10 percent ethanol and 90 percent gasoline and commonly referred to as ethanol, has been available in Iowa since 1979. The DNR has tracked E10 sales since 1986 when annual sales reached 385 million gallons. In 2003, motorists purchased 998 million gallons of E10.

“Iowa motorists have embraced ethanol as a high performance fuel that burns cleaner,” said Lucy Norton, director of marketing for the Iowa Corn Promotion Board. “With winter weather, ethanol sales should continue to rise because ethanol helps protect against moisture in gas lines.”

Ethanol also benefits Iowa's economy, according to Norton. With the recent growth in Iowa's ethanol production to nearly 865 million gallons, this industry alone contributes \$16 million annually in state tax revenues.

Ethanol is also available as E85, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. E85 can be used in flexible-fuel vehicles, which are designed to use any blend of ethanol and gasoline.

For more information on ethanol in Iowa, contact Tami Foster at (515) 281-6558 or tami.foster@dnr.state.ia.us.

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NEW DNR AIR QUALITY PROCESS CUTS TIME, HELPS ECONOMIC PLANNING

DES MOINES — A new process will help Iowa's largest manufacturers obtain air permits in record time and make planning for major expansions more precise by creating less variability in the time needed to issue permits, Department of Natural Resources officials announced today.

Using Japanese-inspired efficiency techniques, which have successfully cut issuance times for other air permits, the DNR tackled Prevention of Significant Deterioration type air permits which are issued for major new manufacturing expansions at some of the most economically vital facilities in Iowa. The detailed permits require extensive information and review, necessary to ensure that Iowa's good air quality is maintained.

"Our major goal is issuing all PSD permits in 180 calendar days," said Jane Mild, the DNR's team leader for the project. "Other complex permits will be issued in 90 days. Current permit issuance times average 214 days, but some permits can take twice that time. And other states need even longer amounts of time."

A team of DNR and Economic Development staff and representatives from Cargill, Deere & Company, Equistar Chemical, Pella Corp., Trinity Consultants, Stanley Environmental and the U.S. EPA worked on a week long, intensive review of the permit process using Kaizen techniques.

"In order to streamline the process and reduce variability, we focused on the front end of the process, prior to submittal of the permit application," said team member Jim Nitzschke, a staff engineer with Deere & Company. The goal is to increase the quality of information included in the permit application to make the review process flow smoothly, he said.

To do so, the DNR will hold pre-application meetings with company officials and the EPA to discuss the project. State officials and team members say the new approach will

help clearly lay out the expectations for the permit and avoid issues that cause delays such as inadequate information.

“That’s significant. What it does is create a partnership. Really, what was causing delay, was everyone working in silos,” said Roger McCombs of Pella Corp., a team member and facilitator.

The DNR also released technical guidelines to help businesses prepare their permit applications. Both efforts began this January. Training will also be offered.

“The purpose is to improve communication between DNR, EPA and the regulated community in terms of what is required for good permit applications,” said Nitzschke. “The new guidelines are designed to help industry understand what is needed and what the process is with fewer surprises,” he said.

The team also established a measurable process so future improvements can be made. “The team discovered a true process was lacking in the current method of issuing permits,” said the DNR’s Mild. “But now we have developed a process flowchart to help everyone understand the steps involved. This will allow us to make further efficiency improvements in the future,” she said.

“What the team did was to try to develop a standard, a target, to try to accomplish repetitively over time. I think they took a significant amount of time out of the system,” said McCombs of Pella Corp.

The DNR has completed seven business process improvement efforts using Japanese inspired techniques in the past year as part of a major commitment to increase efficiency. By eliminating idle time and waste in permit processing and avoiding errors, improvements are made without reducing environmental protection.

“I think the new process changes are phenomenal,” said Catharine Fitzsimmons, air quality bureau chief. “We used to do three PSD projects a year, for many years, and now do 16 or more per year. That’s a huge change that reflects an economy where people have to change manufacturing processing very quickly and the DNR is meeting this challenge.”

For more information contact the DNR’s Jane Mild at 515-480-6106 or 515-281-5105, or Aaron Schmidt at 515-281-4897.

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DNR ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS WEB SITE UPDATED

DES MOINES – Producers and others who want information on animal feeding operations (AFO) in Iowa will find the information more accessible on the recently revised DNR Web site.

Producers, manure applicators and consultants can easily find all forms, fact sheets and a list of DNR staff members who work with animal feeding operations by clicking on the navigation bar on the left side of the AFO home page.

State requirements for producers are divided by facility type, listing completely roofed confinement feeding operations separately from open feedlots. Current requirements and additional requirements for anyone planning to build, modify or expand a facility can be found quickly.

The new Web pages are easily reached from the DNR homepage at www.iowadnr.com by clicking on animal feeding operations. Or, you can access the site directly at <http://www.iowadnr.com/afo/index.html>.

For more information, contact Karen Grimes at (515) 281-5135.